

ARI Research Note 2001-04

## **Army Culture**

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November 2000

**U.S. Army Research Institute**  
**for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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**DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4**

**20001115 126**

**U.S. Army Research Institute  
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**A Directorate of the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command**

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Research accomplished under contract  
for the Department of the Army

University of Ottawa

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## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. REPORT DATE (dd-mm-yy) November 2000		2. REPORT TYPE Final		3. DATES COVERED (from...to) 07/15/98 – 6/30/00	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Army Culture				5a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER DASW01-98-M-1868	
				5b. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER 61102A	
6. AUTHOR(S) Winslow, D.				5c. PROJECT NUMBER B74F	
				5d. TASK NUMBER 1901	
				5e. WORK UNIT NUMBER C01	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of Ottawa Program for Research on Peace Security and Society Center on Governance				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences  5001 Eisenhower Avenue Alexandria, VA 22333-5600				10. MONITOR ACRONYM ARI	
				11. MONITOR REPORT NUMBER Research Note 2001-04	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES: The task was performed under ERO Broad Agency Announcement of September 1992 regarding research in the behavioral sciences.					
14. ABSTRACT ( <i>Maximum 200 words</i> ): <p>Methodological approach to the study of organizational culture gave rise to an economy of explanation which requires three levels of analysis: integration, differentiation, and fragmentation. Studies were classified as integrationist if they assumed or supported the idea of broad coherent patterns across the organization and/or placed an emphasis on a stable set of ideas, values, and norms characterizing the organization as a whole. Studies were classified as differentiated if they looked at specific groups or subcultures within the organization. Studies were classified as fragmented if they looked at the multiplicity of views (no consensus) and complexity focus (not clearly consistent or inconsistent). Army culture reflects the impulse to order (integration) the chaos (fragmentation) of warfare. The cross-pull between order and chaos is a key principle of army culture. Since the chaos of peace operations is qualitatively different from the chaos of war, the structuring of that chaos is bound to change.</p>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Army Culture; Integration Perspective; Differentiation Perspective; Fragmentation Perspective					
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF			19. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  Unlimited	20. NUMBER OF PAGES  79	21. RESPONSIBLE PERSON (Name and Telephone Number) COR: Michael Drillings DSN 767-8641
16. REPORT Unclassified	17. ABSTRACT Unclassified	18. THIS PAGE Unclassified			

# **ARMY CULTURE**

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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Method.....	6
3. Culture Research.....	10
4. The Culture Concept in Organizational Research.....	15
5. Integration Perspective.....	18
5.1 Organizations have culture.....	18
5.2 Organizations are culture.....	21
5.3 Summary.....	29
6. Differentiation Perspective.....	31
6.1 Summary.....	38
7. Fragmentation Perspective .....	40
7.1 Summary.....	45
8. Culture Change – Three Perspectives.....	47
8.1 Integration approach to culture change.....	48
8.2 Differentiation approach to culture change.....	52
8.3 Fragmentation approach to culture change.....	54
8.4 Summary.....	55
9. Conclusions.....	57
10. Bibliography.....	60

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### **Research Requirement:**

To conduct an analysis of the literature pertaining to Army culture in three fields of study: anthropology, organizational studies, and military sociology to elucidate the following three aspects: (1) the definition of Army culture; (2) the observation of Army culture; and (3) the change of Army culture. The analysis and annotated bibliography produced was to be used to form the basis for developing a briefing package for commanders on "Army culture."

### **Procedure:**

Relevant literature related to the understanding, study, and ways to change Army culture were explored in the fields of anthropology, organizational studies, and sociology. The study was limited to works published in English after 1985. In order to have comparative material, references to Marine, Navy, and Air Force cultures were also researched. Using "keyword," "shelve," and "snowball" searches of databases, 6768+ matches were found, of which 2012 were considered relevant, and 327 articles, theses, and books were selected for the annotated bibliography.

The second phase of the project involved writing an analysis of what could be understood about Army culture from the literature. The analysis was broken into four parts. The first part discussed interest in the culture concept in furthering our understanding of the functioning of the Army. The second part addressed what different theoretical schools (rationalism, functionalism, and symbolism) mean by culture and how

people approach the study of culture in organization. The third part examined Army culture, as it would be described by these major theoretical traditions. The fourth part described the impact of external and internal factors on change in organizations in general and in the Army in particular.

The third phase of the project involved the development of a briefing package for Army commanders, drawing upon the extensive review of literature. The package consisted of a computer based presentation, pertaining to issues pertinent to command of Army units. The briefing package was field tested and modified according to the feedback received.

#### **Utilization of Research:**

The purpose of this research report was to produce an analysis of research pertaining to Army culture to elucidate a better understanding of the impact of the Army's organizational culture on its functioning. The analysis highlights how culture can affect the functioning of an Army unit and describes how external forces and internal forces can change the culture of the Army as an organization. The author has attempted to use the literature to identify several ways of measuring Army culture to be used as methods for observing behaviors and social structures within a unit.

## INTRODUCTION

When I hear the word gun, I reach for my culture. -*Alexander Gerschenkron*

Enter center stage the character *Army Culture*. While writing this piece, I was reminded of the time I played a princess in the annual school play. The plot was about confusion and mistaken identities, a prince who was masquerading as a squire and a princess who was mistaken for a serving girl. I do not remember much about the play except that it all turned out well in the end and that my mother applauded (seriously embarrassing me) when the prince kissed me. I also remember the lines of one of the characters, "I give you this gift a wedding day surprise, where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise".

What do school plays have to do with army culture? Well, one could argue that the play was a cultural representation but my point in bringing up the memory is the remembered line about ignorance being bliss. This statement accurately describes my situation after having read hundreds of books and articles on culture, culture theory, organizational culture, militaries and armies in the Western world. Before I began this research project, I, perhaps egotistically, thought I had a clear grasp of what culture was and how I would apply the concept to the army. Now, I cannot profess wisdom and I no longer rely upon the bliss of ignorance.

The popular grasp of culture is similar to the concept of opposition - a concept from semiotics<sup>1</sup> - which suggests that we know something by knowing what it is not. For example,

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<sup>1</sup> Semiotics finds its origins in structural linguistics. It studies the principles of signification. Signification occurs through processes in which events, words, behaviors and objects carry meaning. Semiotics studies the processes through which meaning is conferred and the content of those meanings (Barley 1992: 53).



hot is not cold and up is not down. This opposition does not, however, inform us on the temperature of “hot” nor the exact height of “up”. Thus we have an idea of what up and hot are, but we do not have scientific accuracy nor measurement. This is similar to the way we often conceive of culture. We have an intuitive understanding of what it is and what it is not, yet when faced with the challenge of determining and measuring culture exactly we end up with a plurality of definitions and methods. As Frost et al (1991: 7) have pointed out, “culture researchers do not agree about what is culture or why it should be studied. They do not study the same phenomena. They do not approach the phenomena they do study from the same theoretical, epistemological, or methodological points of view”.

After much consideration I have adopted a pluralistic approach since it provides a varied assortment of lenses for viewing army culture. Inspired by the work of Martin (1992) Martin and Meyerson (1988) and Frost et al. (1991) I will analyze the literature on army culture according to three perspectives: Integration, Differentiation, and Fragmentation. These levels of analysis flow from macro to micro: that is from the Integrated to Fragmented perspective. The macro Integrated approach leads us to the large brushstrokes, major themes, structures and formal values of the organization. The Differentiated approach gives us insight into the sub groups and informal culture(s) within the organization and finally the Fragmented approach shows us how individuals grasp different and sometimes contradictory and ambiguous fragments of the organizational culture.

It is important to remember that these three perspectives are just that - perspectives. They represent points of view or points of inquiry into organizational culture. Just as observing sunrise over a town from three different hilltops, each gives us one vantage point from which we can observe the town. None can capture the total experience of sunrise over

the town yet all three angles give us a more complete impression than just one. Thus each perspective can offer us important information concerning army culture. The Integration approach allows a researcher to examine core values, organizational structures, and symbol systems. The Differentiation approach allows us to see the formation of subcultures within the army. The final Fragmentation approach allows us to deal with ambiguities which can exist in the organization. Each of the frameworks above reflects a major trend in theoretical approaches to organizational culture. By using all three in a meta-theoretical<sup>2</sup> approach we are able to grasp different aspects of army culture.

Let us take the metaphor of music for a moment. Technically music is a collection of acoustic vibrations but that is not what we think of when we think of "music". Just as in culture, we have an intuitive grasp of what is and what is not music. It implies an act of performance in the way that culture implies social interaction. The Integration perspective to organizational culture can be likened to a performance of the national anthem - everyone sings together the same words and the same tune in harmony with each other. The tune like the words are shared by all. The Differentiation perspective is like a symphony - everyone playing different pieces of music which comprise a totality. However, each section of the orchestra (violins, trombones) plays a different part. The trombone players master their own piece of music and they may or may not be aware of the violinists' exact music. The Fragmentation perspective can be considered like jazz improvisation. The individual musicians master their instrument and have basic shared understandings of the principles of music however what emerges is unpredictable and is created in the moment by the social interaction of the musicians in the performance. It is thus irregular and can never be repeated

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<sup>2</sup> According to Martin and Frost (1996: 610) a meta-theory claims to encompass and thereby surpass prior, more narrow theories by moving to a higher level of abstraction. Thus, when a

over and over in the same way as a symphony or national anthem can. It is fleeting and fragmentary. Each of the jazz musicians may construct his or her part of the music as a direct result of what the others have just played or perhaps the musician will head off in an entirely new direction. It is not scripted.

Each of these forms of performance is music, and tells us something about music (notes, keys, tempos etc). Each of them alone does not comprise all of music, however they all tell us something about some aspect of music. By examining all three forms of music we have a larger grasp of what music is and can be. In a similar way we are proposing to examine organizational culture and in particular army culture using three analytical approaches. Each gives us a different perspective on culture and on organization. The reader will see below that army culture contains elements congruent with all three perspectives. If any organization is studied in enough depth, some issues, values, and objectives will be seen to generate organization-wide consensus, consistency, and clarity (an Integration view). At the same time other aspects of an organization's culture will coalesce into subcultures that hold conflicting opinions about what is important, what should happen and why (a Differentiation view). Finally, some problems and issues will be ambiguous, in a state of constant flux, generating multiple, plausible interpretations (a Fragmentation view). Thus each perspective in its own way will reveal one aspect of reality. By combining them, by multiplying the number of levels of analysis we can more fully interpret army culture. In particular we will see how culture research can explore the interplay between homogeneity, conflict and ambiguity in the organization.

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cultural context is viewed from all three perspectives, a deeper understanding will emerge.

Why is it important to study army culture? According to Murray (1999:27). "Military culture may be the most important factor not only in military effectiveness, but also in the processes involved in military innovation, which is essential to preparing military organizations for the next war". Certainly, in order to know and break the enemy, you first have to know yourself. Culture and its family of concepts offers military leaders a vocabulary of description and analysis with which we can examine this institution known as the army. Moreover, it can provide new perspectives and avenues of inquiry into the organization by bringing to the surface hidden or obscured meanings, and by offering images and interpretations that, if nothing else, will contribute to an more informed debate. The use of multiple perspectives can permit leaders to see and understand more. According to Druckman et al. (1997: 379) "Leaders fail when they take too narrow a view of the context in which they are working. Unless they can think flexibly about organizations and see them from multiple angles, they will be unable to deal with the full range of issues that they will inevitably encounter".

After briefly outlining my methodology in the next section, I will examine three perspectives (Integration, Differentiation and Fragmentation) used in studying organizational behavior, see how studies of the army can be viewed according to these perspectives and how they can inform us about the nature of army culture and changing that culture.

## ***2. Method***

“Explain all that,” said the Mock Turtle. “No, no! The **adventures** first,” said the Gryphon in an impatient tone: “explanations take such a dreadful time.” -*Lewis Carroll What the Tortoise said to Achilles, 1895*

My work on army culture began in 1995 with Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia. One of the issues the Canadian Parliament had asked the Inquiry to look into was the extent to which “culture” had affected the conduct of operations. Thus began my interest in military anthropology/sociology. I worked for two years as a technical advisor to the Inquiry and published a study on Airborne Culture (Winslow 1997). Since then I have continued to publish and conduct research on the Canadian Forces and particularly the Canadian Army. I have also carried out field research with Canadian Forces in Bosnia and on the Golan Heights.

This project began with the preparation of an annotated bibliography pertaining to army culture (Winslow 1999c). In order to produce the bibliography we<sup>3</sup> examined the material available in three fields of study: anthropology, organizational studies, and military sociology. The goal of the annotated bibliography was to produce a summary and critique of each article and book selected. The basis for selection was the document’s relevance to the understanding of army culture and in particular the three following aspects: 1) the definition of army culture; 2) the observation of army culture; and, 3) the change of army culture. This analysis of the literature and its relevance to the understanding of army culture is based upon the (350+) books and articles found in the annotated bibliography.

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<sup>3</sup> I wish to thank my two research assistants, Jason Dunn and Glen Gilmour, for their invaluable help.

The complexity of the field of organizational culture exerted certain demands upon my methodological approach and gave rise to an “economy of explanation” (Chanlat 1994). This economy of explanation requires a respect for the three levels of analysis. In this sense I have not attempted to be exhaustive. If the model is clearly grasped then the reader will be able to classify a document on army culture according to one of the perspectives. I have therefore opted to use the literature as illustrations of the three perspectives. I am aware that this economical approach does have its limitations since as Martin and Frost (1996: 610) point out there is the danger of ignoring aspects of studies that straddle boundaries among the perspectives, omitting unclassifiable research or relegating it to marginalized places in the text.

The meta-theoretical model is outlined in Table 1. Briefly, studies were classified as Integrationist if they assumed or supported the idea of broad coherent patterns across the organization and/or placed an emphasis on a stable set of ideas, values and norms characterizing the organization as a whole. According to Martin (1992 : 12) studies conducted from an Integration perspective have three defining characteristics: all cultural manifestations mentioned are interpreted as consistently reinforcing the same themes, all members of the organization are said to share in an organization wide consensus, and the culture is described as a realm where all is clear. Ambiguity is excluded. The reader will see that the majority of work on army culture falls into this category.

Studies were classified as Differentiated if they looked at specific groups or subcultures within the organization, such as commando units, the Airborne, NCOs, etc. Differentiation studies define culture in terms that are similar to the definition in Integration - culture is shared. However, it is the group and not the entire organization which has

consistency. Consensus exists but only within the boundaries of subcultures which might find themselves in opposition to each other or to the organization. Martin (1992:12) tells us that ambiguity is channeled so that it does not intrude on the clarity which exists within these sub cultural boundaries. If ambiguity and conflict is discussed then it is in the interface between a subculture and other elements of the organization.

The Fragmented perspective perhaps most adequately explains the chaos of war yet it is the least used in studies of military culture. In a Fragmented approach, culture is a loosely structured and incompletely shared system that emerges dynamically as cultural members experience each other, events and the organization's contextual features (Martin 1992: 152). "The assumption is that a multiplicity of views exists; ambiguity and change may appear in any number of places and vary with issues that the organization faces" (Ginger 1988: 727). Groups coalesce around specific issues and are therefore context dependent. What binds them together is a shared frame of reference or shared recognition of relevant issues (see Feldman 1991: 154).

<u>Perspective</u>			
<u>Features</u>	<u>Integration</u>	<u>Differentiation</u>	<u>Fragmentation</u>
<i>Orientation to consensus</i>	organization-wide consensus	Sub cultural consensus	multiplicity of views (no consensus)
<i>Relation among manifestations</i>	consistency	inconsistency	complexity (not clearly consistent or inconsistent)
<i>Orientation to ambiguity</i>	exclude it	channel it outside subcultures	focus on it
<i>Metaphors</i>	culture as glue, organization as machine or "little society"	sub groups as islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity	culture as web, organization as jungle

Table 1: Characteristics of the three perspectives on organizations .

After: Martin (1992) *Cultures in Organizations. Three Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press p. 13



### ***3. Culture Research***

For well over a hundred years, culture has been a substantive – a noun. It either did things or things happened to it. It existed but it was inert. -*Paul Bohannon*

Studies of organizational culture do draw upon several neighboring fields - anthropology, psychology<sup>4</sup> and sociology. The interest in anthropology came from the use of the metaphor of organizations as “little societies”<sup>5</sup>, as social systems equipped with socialization processes, social norms, and structures.<sup>6</sup> Within this broad metaphor<sup>7</sup> the idea developed that if organizations are little societies then they should have their own cultures. Thus came the interest in cultural or social anthropology and of course in ethnographic field methods of extended “residence” in the community and participant observation, that is, observation of and participation in many activities of the community in addition to extensive qualitative interviews.

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<sup>4</sup> We do not intend to examine psychological studies of organizations in this paper. This aspect of organizational analysis has primarily been found in studies of organizational climate. However there are other interesting theories. For an example see Schneider's (1987) work which argues that it is the attributes of people not the external environment, organizational technology nor organizational structure which are the fundamental determinant of organizational behavior. Another example is Judge and Cable's (1997) work into how personality traits are related to person-organization fit (congruence between applicant and recruiting organization's culture).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Deal and Kennedy (1983) talked about organizations as “tribes” with shared values, heroes and heroines, rituals and ceremonies, and cultural networks. Ouchi and Wilkins (1983) use the word “tribe”.

<sup>6</sup> See Ouchi and Wilkins (1983: 468) and Allaire and Firsirotu (1984: 193) for details.

<sup>7</sup> In fact organization itself a form of metaphor referring to pattern and order. There are certainly other metaphors for culture such as the organization as super person with needs, goals, values etc., the organization as machine which must run smoothly, well-oiled etc. For details on the many metaphors for culture in organizations see Alvesson (1993).

British Social Anthropology (particularly the work of Malinowski - functionalism<sup>8</sup> - and Radcliffe Brown - structural functionalism<sup>9</sup>) had a impact on the development of the culture concept in organization studies. These authors see culture as a component of a socio-cultural system that is manifested in a society's way of life and social products. Thus the social group must be studied as a whole in order to see how its practices, beliefs and other cultural elements function to maintain social structure. Culture is usually seen as a dependent variable (shaped by a unique time and environment) or an independent one (shaping the beliefs and behaviors of people). The other large conceptual approach in anthropology sees culture as an ideational system where cultural and social realms are distinct but interrelated. Culture is located in the minds of culture bearers (cognitive anthropology<sup>10</sup>) or in the products of minds, that is, shared meanings and symbols (symbolic anthropology, semiotics<sup>11</sup>) (see Allaire and Firsirotu 1984 for details).

However, the focus on small-scale societies in anthropology and the conceptualization of culture as a unique and homogeneous pattern perpetuated the idea of culture as an monolithic entity. In contrast, sociologists have advocated a less monolithic view of culture and, according to Ouchi and Wilkins (1985: 458, 462) sociology has had an important impact

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<sup>8</sup> In the functionalist approach, culture is seen as a mechanism for satisfying needs and dealing with problems which arise in the course of satisfying basic needs such as shelter, reproduction, etc. Social institutions, myths, rituals etc. are part of the process of this need satisfaction.

<sup>9</sup> In structural functionalism, culture is seen as an adaptive mechanism through which people can live in a social group in a particular environment. Culture is just one component of a social system which also includes a social structure and adaptation mechanisms.

<sup>10</sup> Cognitive anthropology sees culture as a system of knowledge, learned standards and rules which allow people to operate in a particular environment.

<sup>11</sup> In Semiotics culture is a shared system of meanings, webs of significance which are used to interpret the environment (see Barley 1991: 53 for details).

on organizational studies, particularly the work of Durkheim<sup>12</sup>, Weber<sup>13</sup> and Toennies<sup>14</sup>. But perhaps it is Irving Goffman's (1961) work on total institutions<sup>15</sup> which has had the most impact on the study of military organizations. As in the total institutions (mental asylums, prisons) that Goffman studied, soldiers and officers find themselves in an orderly structure that determines who they are and what they do in addition to what their obligations to others are. When the institutional element is dominant in a military organization, leisure time, family matters, living conditions, salary and career prospects in the civilian market place are relatively insignificant compared to life in the military.

According to Soeters (1997: 10) an institutional orientation implies a total dedication to the organization, in which living and working are one and the same and families fully comply to the organization's requirements. An example of this type of research is the book *No Life Like It* which describes the socialization of spouses into the Canadian Forces culture of their husbands (Harrison and Laliberte, 1994). This study is particularly relevant for

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<sup>12</sup> Durkheim studied forms of group cohesion/solidarity in addition to stressing the importance of the study of myth and ritual as being complementary to the study of social structure. His work on mechanical and organic solidarity has been used to study primary group cohesion in military groups (see Winslow 1999a).

<sup>13</sup> Weber, of course, is well known for his studies of emerging form of bureaucracy during his time (late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe). At that time, Weber observed that military discipline and technical training could only be fully developed in a bureaucratic army because bureaucracy created the conditions for predictability and coordinated action. Indicators of bureaucratization are: the number of laws and rules; the fact that leadership is based on rank or authority; and, the fact that reference groups are vertically situated, e.g. higher ranking officers. According to Bohman and Deal (1997: 38) when his work was "rediscovered" after WWII it led to an examination of structures and why one organizational structure is chosen over another and how structure impacts upon morale, productivity and effectiveness.

<sup>14</sup> Toennies is cited for his work on group cohesion. Toennies' (1957) notion of *Gemeinschaft*, refers to a social state in which belonging is pervasive and where primary group relations predominate. Individuals exhibit strong allegiance to their group and the group exerts social control over the individual member.

<sup>15</sup> Goffman (1961: xiii) defines total institutions as a place "of residence and work where a large number of liked-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered way of life".

women living on base and for families posted overseas who find themselves on “cultural islands” divorced from the local community through linguistic and social differences.

In institutional research on the military, socialization studies looked at the power of military (formal and informal) socialization processes to change recruits’ perceptions so that they come into line with those of the institution.<sup>16</sup> Authors examine how organizational norms and values are transmitted to the newcomer. For example, conventional army training intensifies the power of group pressure within its ranks through training where recruits are taught the need for teamwork. Teamwork or cohesion is one of the ways in which the army can marshal the capabilities of each individual member for the pursuit of a common goal. Recruits become “no longer civilian” and are thus able to break the civilian taboo of “thou shall not kill”. Basic training is a special time/space separate from civilian life where different norms of behavior and expression are acquired. Studies of army basic training (e.g. Hockey 1986) show how it was aimed at dispossessing individuals of their civilian / individual identity (through processes which erode self-determination, autonomy of movement, privacy and individuality of appearance). This supposedly makes recruits receptive to their new soldierly role. Thus military socialization (whether it be anticipatory, i.e. individuals self-select for an organization that reflects their personal world view) or secondary (i.e. instilling a worldview) underlines the differences between civilian and military

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<sup>16</sup> Many early socialization studies examined processes in military academies (see Dornbusch 1955; Zucher 1967). These authors emphasize the importance of transmitting organization norms and values to the newcomers. Later studies (e.g. Wamsley 1972) became more concerned about the presence of institutional (heroic) vs. occupational (managerial) values among cadets. In the late 1970’s studies (see Cockerham 1973) challenged the effectiveness of socialization. Authors contended that “anticipatory socialization” that is the degree to which the individual is prepared (through personal characteristics, personality, the sharing of core value, etc.) to enter the organization played a more important role in the individual’s integration into the organization.

cultures.<sup>17</sup> This is still an important subject area given a growing fear that there is a widening civil - military gap or cultural divide between American society and the U.S. military establishment (see Ricks 1997a, 1997b) and of course the ensuing debate as to how different the military should be from the democratic society from which it draws its legitimacy (for a discussion of this debate see Collins 1998; Hillen 1999; Winslow and Dandeker 1999).

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<sup>17</sup> There were also studies of hazing in military academies. The impact of this extreme form of initiation was noted as early as the 1950s when Aronson and Mills (1959) remarked that an initiate who endures severe hazing is likely to find membership in a group all the more appealing. In these rituals soldiers are proving their readiness to participate in the group regardless of the personal cost, thus gaining peer group acceptance. See Winslow (1999b) for a discussion of hazing and initiation rites.

#### ***4. The Culture Concept in Organizational Research***

As we saw in the previous section, one of the reasons for the diversity in the definitions of the concept of culture<sup>18</sup> is that it lies at the intersection of several fields of research. I have no desire to do an exhaustive overview of the topic and there have already been a number of important reviews of the culture concept in organizational literature (see Allaire and Firsirotu 1984; Alvesson 1993; Alvesson and Berg 1992; Barley et al. 1988; Boyce 1996; Denison 1996; Jeffcutt 1994; Ouchi and Wilkins 1985; Smircich 1983). The actual term “organizational culture” first entered US academic literature in 1979 in an article in *Administrative Science Quarterly*, by Pettigrew. It began to receive a lot of attention in the 1980s. An anthology on *Organizational Symbolism* (Pondy et al.) appeared, *Administrative Science Quarterly* (Vol. 28, No. 3) and *Organizational Dynamics* (Vol. 12, No. 2) devoted entire issues to the topic in 1983 and from January 1983 to July 1988 the Management/Organizational Development literature listed 1029 separate citations which included organizational culture or corporate culture as key words (Eubanks and Lloyd 1992: 29).

Some authors (e.g. Cartwright 1999; Druckman et al. 1997; Martin and Frost, 1996) cite Japan's economic miracles as the reason which prompted US researches to look at relationship between organization and culture. It was believed that Japan's economic achievements were a result of the way the country's culture was able to absorb, adapt and improve upon American technology and management methods resulting in what is popularly known as “total quality management”. Other authors (see Alvesson and Berg 1992; Meyerson

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<sup>18</sup> In an extensive review of articles and books on the subject from 1960 - 1993 Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels (1998: 315) found 54 definitions of organizational culture.

1991) cite the growing dissatisfaction with the rationalist approach to organizations and the positivistically oriented research methodologies which had failed to capture aspects that had to do with the informal and subjective sides of organizational life. Thus, the initial work on culture in organizations allowed for a break with the traditional positivistic and quantitative approaches and allowed qualitative and ethnographic<sup>19</sup> approaches to be introduced and acquire legitimacy. It was thought that culture research could also help apprehend the “irrational” attributes of groups through the discovery of hidden meanings and motives.

The first organizational cultural publications were widely influential and have been labeled as “value engineering” (Martin and Frost 1996: 602 ) because these authors argued that effective cultural leaders could create “strong cultures” around core company values. Perhaps the best example is Peters and Waterman’s *In Search of Excellence* (1982) where they argued that the key to corporate success was a strong unified culture. Managers could create this unified culture by articulating a set of values and then constantly reinforcing them through formal policies and informal norms, rites and rituals, etc. Other examples of this approach are Deal and Kennedy’s (1982) *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*. Thus culture was “something” that could be designed by management in order to shape the behavior of employees.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ethnography usually describes a small social group using participant observation and qualitative interview techniques. The anthropologist Franz Boas is credited with establishing the tradition of a long residence in another culture in order to understand its culture from the point of view of its members.

<sup>20</sup> Sometimes the military is mentioned in organizational studies of culture. For example, Deal and Kennedy (1982) outlined four cultural profiles or types of corporate culture according to two critical factors: the degree of risk associated with the company’s activities, and the speed at which companies and employees get feedback on whether decisions or strategies are successful. The military fell into the “Bet-your-company” profile which is high risk but slow in receiving feedback from the environment.

The instrumental value of culture to orient organizational members in the right (read determined by management) direction came to dominate the whole field as researchers and consultants<sup>21</sup> became preoccupied with the creation and maintenance of strong organizational cultures. According to Alvesson (1989: 127) this led to a neglect of aspects which were of importance to a broad understanding of organizations in a culture perspective, but which were of no immediate interest to efficiency-minded managers. Thus, the culture metaphor which began as a rebellion against rationalism fell into the trap of becoming just another variable that could be managed and manipulated in order to achieve better organizational performance.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Many researchers became preoccupied with applied work, so much so that influential writers such as Schein 1998: 231 came to believe, "The field can progress only when we have a set of concepts... that provide some link to the concerns of practitioners who are solving real organizational problems here and now".

<sup>22</sup> Note that this attitude is still very pervasive (see Cartwright 1999).



## ***5. Integration Perspective***

The Integration perspective is by far the most popular approach for examining army culture. Within the integration perspective we can observe two major approaches to the subject: the views that organizations have culture vs. organizations are culture. According to Jordan (1995) the first approach is functionalist while the latter is symbolic (and we might add - cognitive).

### ***5.1 Organizations have culture***

In the approach “organizations have culture”, theoreticians attempt to understand the culture of a whole group, the functions that culture performs in maintaining the group, or the conditions under which the group and its culture develop (Ouchi and Wilkins 1985: 471). Culture is just one variable among several others such as structure, tasks, technology etc. As a dependent variable, researchers examine how the organizational culture can be shaped by particular practices such as leadership. As an independent variable, researchers examine how culture external to the organization (such as national culture) can affect the organization. An example of this in military sociological research is the work of Soeters (1997) and Soeters and Recht (1998).

In his 1997 study, Soeters uses Hofstede's (1980, 1991) approach to studying differences between different national labor forces.<sup>23</sup> While examining the differences among IBM employees in over 50 countries, Hofstede found four cultural dimensions which expressed national differences: power distance (perceived and accepted social inequality and the relation to authority); individualism (importance attached to leisure time, family life and comfortable living conditions); masculinity (importance attached to income growth and the possibilities of promotion); and, uncertainty avoidance (level of anxiety when confronted with unknown situations). Soeters applied these dimensions to military academies and found that the cultural profiles of military cadets in thirteen countries differed with one another. Soeters and Recht (1998) used the same model on eighteen national militaries and arrived at similar results. This research has important implications for "cultural interoperability" in multinational operations.<sup>24</sup>

Culture can also be mapped or measured on a scale of values e.g. strong or weak cultures<sup>25</sup> or efficient and inefficient cultures.<sup>26</sup> The major goals of this approach are to determine how to mold and shape internal culture in particular ways and how to change culture according to the needs of management. Culture is thus perceived as an attribute of the organization which can be manipulated. It is often reduced to values and norms. An example of this is the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) report on American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century (2000). Although the authors clearly say they are

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<sup>23</sup> According to Hofstede, culture is a collective "programming of the mind" which distinguishes members of one national culture from another. Differences between populations can be examined by measuring value differences between groups.

<sup>24</sup> For another approach to cultural interoperability see Winslow and Everts (2000).

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Kotter and Heskett (1992) Deal and Kennedy (1982) who measure culture's internal consistency and impact on members.

<sup>26</sup> See for example, Peters and Waterman (1982) or Denyson (1996) who examine the organization's ability to fulfill goals and innovate.

studying culture and that their definition of culture is “how things are done in a military organization” (CSIS 2000: xviii) they only study the extent to which members say they support traditional military values and how members feel about the organization. Their study does not appear to be based upon any observation of how things are actually done.

The CSIS study <sup>27</sup> draws upon the work of James Burk (1999) who also defines military culture in terms of essential elements. Burk’s work centers on elements of formal military culture and particularly how war fighting determines central values, beliefs and symbols – discipline, professional ethos, ceremony and etiquette, cohesion and esprit de corps.<sup>28</sup> In Integration studies, such as the CSIS one, the health of the organization is measured by the extent to which these elements are shared by members of the organization.

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<sup>27</sup> Other authors (e.g. Snider 1999) also adopt Burk’s definitions of military culture.

<sup>28</sup> Burk (1999: 447) defines discipline as the behavior of military personnel in conformity with previously prescribed rules, command, instruction and drills. Ethos refers to the normative understandings that define the corporate identity, code of conduct, and social worth of the officer corps. Ceremonies are the rituals of collective action that mark certain events or passages to new rank or status within the life of the military unit. Etiquette is the normative prescriptions that guide or control interpersonal behavior especially between those of different rank or status. Cohesion refers to the emotional bond of shared identity and camaraderie among soldiers within their local unit. In sociological terms this means horizontal or primary group integration. Esprit de Corps is the commitment and pride soldiers take in their military establishment and its effectiveness. In sociological terms this means vertical or secondary group integration.

## 5.2 Organizations are culture

In the approach “organizations are cultures” culture is not something an organization *has*, it is something an organization *is*. This approach is ideational or symbolic.<sup>29</sup> Researchers seek to identify and document the various symbolic forms through which the culture of an organization expresses itself, and identify the patterns of subjective meaning embodied in the content and context of cultural practice. Organizations are seen as expressive forms and manifestations of human consciousness. “An organization may be viewed as a specific cultural setting in which human actors, ... construct social realities and negotiate meaning for their lives” (Jermier 1991: 230-1). Culture thus becomes a root concept for understanding human ideas and behaviors expressed in the organization.

Schein<sup>30</sup> is often used in describing military culture (e.g. Arnold 1996, Widen 1997) and as a result studies in this tradition define military culture as the deep structure rooted in the prevailing assumptions, norms, values, customs, and traditions which collectively, over time have created shared individual expectations among members. It is a form of glue which hold people together (Snider 1999: 14). Authors working in Schein’s (1990) tradition distinguish between three levels of culture:

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<sup>29</sup> In a summary of symbolic approaches to culture Alvesson and Berg (1992: 131) have classified ten out of twelve perspectives as what would be considered integrative.

<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that Schein did some early work for the military on what he termed “coercive persuasion”. He studied the behavior of POWs and their Chinese captors during the Korean conflict, particularly those who had collaborated, made false confessions etc. He found that through a series of techniques similar to those used upon Western civilian prisoners in political prisons on the Chinese mainland, (manipulation of information, incentives, group support and the captor’s complete sincerity) prisoners were converted to a new point of view, a kind of cognitive redefinition (see Schein 1996 for details).

1. Artifacts – such as uniforms, unit patches, berets (These artifacts also mark different army sub cultures such as Ranger, Paratroop, Artillery etc.). According to Van Maanen (1991: 62) “Uniforms ... provide instant communication about the social merits or demerits of the wearer”. Artifacts also include living conditions (for example, high security fences around Ranger compounds<sup>31</sup>) or work space which often demonstrate that rank has its privileges. Artifacts also include flags, monuments, plaques, pictures etc. There are also specific rituals and ceremonies which can be observed. Monuments and ceremonies often make reference to “those who have gone before” and even though the army is not technically a family this is a form of ancestor worship or cult of the dead where the living family members remember.
2. Espoused values – These defined sets of values appear in military doctrine, statements about ethos, code of service, oath of enlistment, etc. Values include self-sacrifice, discipline, obedience to legitimate authority, physical and moral courage, mental toughness, loyalty and respect for comrades, unit and nation. An example of espoused values is the US Army’s use of the word LDSHIP (Loyalty, Duty, Selfless service, Honor, Integrity, Personal courage). These espoused values underpin the formal structure of the organization such as the hierarchy of subordinate commands and the importance of the chain of command.
3. Basic underlying assumptions – These are the ultimate source of values and actions. They are not written down but permeate conceptual modes.

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<sup>31</sup> For a description of Ranger culture according to Schein’s model see Johnson (1998).

Let's examine just a few basic underlying assumptions of the US Army as described by Scroggs (1996). According to Scroggs, the core concept of combat defines all assumptions – “We must fight and win the nation's wars”. To enhance war fighting competence the Army needs to be internally focused. That is, the Army looks inward to address and resolve the challenges of maintaining or improving its professional war fighting competence.<sup>32</sup> This can result in a dislike for non army people commenting on core functions and the attitude of “don't wash dirty linen in public”. Another assumption described by Scroggs is “Muddy Boots can do it all” which means that Army personnel don't need special training for peace keeping operations if their combat skills are up to speed. Another spin on this is that a good combat leader can do anything such as talk to media, congressmen, etc.

The “Muddy Boots can do it all” attitude is similar to the “can do attitude” which also stems from combat realities. In the field you have to make do with what you've got and play the cards you are dealt. In another context it can lead to over extending resources. McCormick tells us that the US Army to a greater degree than the other services, sees itself as the nation's loyal servant. As a result, “senior officers convey a more dutiful ‘can do’ attitude with respect to civilian directives, even if these actions are antithetical to the Army's national interests” (McCormick 1998: 59). Similarly, in Canada the ethics of “can do” attitudes leads to a tendency to try to please everyone when taskings arise, in particular when faced with resource or capability limitations. There is a natural temptation to respond to pressure or perceptions of governmental and public expectations with “can do” attitudes that may exceed capabilities.

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<sup>32</sup> This is very similar to Finer's (1976) analysis as to why the British Army does not concern itself with politics. He maintains the professionalization of the officer corps resulted in the Army becoming more self-centered, and the attention of those in command was concentrated on the development of increasingly sophisticated military skills.

Adams (1990) uses Schein's approach to conclude that problems with the US Army have to do with the assumption that there are two separable largely autonomous spheres of action which can be labeled political and military. This separation originates in and is reinforced by the demands of Army professionalism which requires that an exclusive sphere of expertise be defined. According to Adams (1990: 1) this is reflected and reinforced by a professional creed which makes avoidance of politics a basic value and leads to an assertion of moral superiority based, in large part, upon an avoidance of the "hallmark" of politics: compromise and ambiguity.

Carl Builder's *Masks of War* (1989) is also in this tradition of research. Builder examines the specific service cultures of the US military according to five aspects: 1) altars of worship (the US Army believes in service to that nation, utter devotion to the country through service); 2) terms of self measurement (the Army measures its health in terms of its people); 3) preoccupation with toys versus the arts (the Army is more focused on its people and the basic skills of soldiering); 4) degree and extent of intra service (or branch) distinctions (in the Army, the basic distinction is between the combat arms and all the others who are in a support role to the combat arms); 5) insecurities about service legitimacy and relevancy. Builder then goes on to describe how these underlying assumptions translate into specific service identities and behavior and how they affect strategy, analysis, and military planning.

According to Builder (1989: 33) the US Army sees itself first and foremost, as the nation's obedient and loyal servant and the neutral instrument of state policy. In this way the Army is able to divest itself of political responsibility in spite of the political nature of the

tasks it is asked to perform. Builder also adds a historical<sup>33</sup> dimension to his analysis. He maintains (1989: 38, 185) that the compounding experiences of the two World Wars have left the US Army with a strong and positive self- image as the liberator of Europe. This self image also encouraged the Army to become fixated on fighting another large scale land war in the European theatre. In a later article (Setear, Builder, Baccus, and Madewell 1990) he picks up on the same theme and asserts that the US Army has focused upon its combat power on the battlefield, and particularly on the armed defense of central Europe, rather than on its historically established tasks of general military service to the nation.<sup>34</sup> Thus, one underlying assumption guides all Army policy and vision, "We believe that the Army's thoughts and actions, reflect a single dominant, widely shared sense of identity and purpose: the instantly ready armored defense of central Europe" (Setear, Builder, Baccus, and Madewell 1990: 23).

Another form of "organizations are culture" studies focuses on the symbolic aspects of the army. Some of the best examples of this work are to be found among Israeli anthropologists studying the IDF (Israeli Defense Force). Ben-Ari (1998) looks at the ways in which military meanings (publicly shared symbols, metaphors, images, etc.) are organized and used. Using a social constructionist framework<sup>35</sup> he explains how soldiers and officers in field units make sense of soldiering and commanding.

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<sup>33</sup> Historical dimensions to the study of military culture are rare. Authors often prefer a snapshot view of the organization's culture or speak of it as if it were enduring and unchanging. A notable exception is Wilson's (1980) historical approach to western military culture.

<sup>34</sup> According to Setear, Builder, Baccus, and Madewell (1990: vii) the Army historically performed many non combat functions such as patrolling US frontiers, mobilizing the citizenry and building canals and dams - tasks which today would be considered more like peace keeping operations.

<sup>35</sup> According to Berger and Luckmann (1967) because of societal mechanisms social constructs are internalized in collective and shared mental symbolic universes Social constructivism thus looks at the processes of symbolic interaction and meaning-making engaged in by organizational members.



Symbolic studies also look at rites and rituals which are seen as crucial links between ideologies that provide the framework for collective life and the associated forms of individual experience. Army rituals range from the small routines such as saluting to the complex ceremonies of change of command, military funerals, parades etc. There are also informal ceremonies among peers. For example my own work on Airborne rites of initiation (Winslow 1999b) shows how soldiers are proving their readiness to participate in the group regardless of the personal cost, thus gaining peer group acceptance. Airborne initiation rites are collectively produced, structured, and dramatic occasions that create a “frame”, a shared definition of the situation within which participants are expected to express and “confirm sanctioned ways of experiencing social reality ” (Kunda 1992: 93) . In the Airborne both formal and informal rituals promote the dependence of the individual on the group.

In a similar vein, Sion’s (1997) work focuses on the symbolic processes that young men serving in the Israeli infantry undergo. In particular she looks at army service in the IDF as a rite of initiation into becoming a full male member of Israeli society.<sup>36</sup> The attributes of manhood in this situation are physical condition, self control, professionalism, aggressiveness and heterosexuality. Women are perceived of as tramp<sup>37</sup> or protected as girlfriend or wife. This is very similar to views of women among privates in the British Army (see Hockey 1986: 115-117). Ben-Ari (1998) makes an interesting observation in this matter. His analysis of the IDF shows the importance of controlling emotion in the identity of soldiers and

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<sup>36</sup> This subject has been the focus of other extensive studies by psychologists. See for example, Liebllich (1989).

<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Morris (1996: 718) tells us of the use of the acronym “WUBA” among US sailors i.e. “women used by all”.

officers. "Because emotions may impede the performance of military tasks they must be overcome, channeled , and above all controlled" (Ben-Ari 1998: 44).

One might infer from this research that if military professionalism is the "rational" control of violence and combat is the core of this identity, then women might be excluded because they are (in popular culture, at least) considered to be "irrational" and/or "emotional". Ralston tells us that in the military, femininity is a "negative identity". "The very presence of women continues to result in charges that the military has gone soft, is losing its discipline, or that combat readiness is diminished" (Ralston 1998: 678). As General Westmoreland said (quoted in Morris 1996: 708) "No man with gumption wants a woman to fight his battles". Morris (1996: 708, 718) refers to this view of women as "essential otherness" and believes that military culture is built around a central group-identity structure, which in turn, is built around a particular construction of masculinity. She cites David Marlowe, Chief of Military Psychiatry at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, "In the world of the combat soldier... masculinity is an essential measure of capability" (cited in Morris 1996: 708).

Symbolic studies often entail the study of language as an expression of culture. In fact, Elkin did a very interesting study of soldier's language in the 1940's. He looked at the use of acronyms and even obscenities to show how these expressions "give the soldier a unique universe of discourse which help distinguish him, and thus they become a binding in-group force" (Elkin 1946:415).<sup>38</sup> Hockey found the same significance over forty years later. He tells us that swearing is a generalized practice for non officers. The wholesale use of such

language, taboo in much of civilian life, reinforces and symbolizes the status of masculine soldier. (Hockey 1986: 36). Ralston (1998: 679) makes the observation that (formerly) basic training employed sexist and homophobic language interchangeably, indoctrinating recruits into association of maleness and heterosexuality. Morgan, Frost and Pondy (1983: 11) have remarked, "The use of language is rich in symbolic significance. It carries patterns of meaning which do much to evoke and define the realities of organizational life, and is a topic central to the analysis of organizational symbolism".

More recent work on army language includes Irwin's (1993) observations of the language habits of Canadian NCOs. Whatever their background, they cultivate a form of speech which is full of grammatical errors, and sprinkled with expletives in order to seem not too well educated or distant from their men. Irwin also studied the use of specific words to manage social distance and rank. First names are only used among peers in social situations away from the ears of subordinates. Officers are always referred to as "sir" while the company commander and senior NCOs are referred to by their appointment, (e.g. Sergeant Major), never by name. In contrast, officers and senior NCOs address the men by rank or surname. Other forms of verbal behavior have also been studied. Ladkani (1993) did an ethnographic study of marching or running cadences during infantry training in Fort Benning, Georgia. Complementing the "muscular bonding" that is going on through joint physical exercise, the cadence allows for expression of collective experience (e.g. the sergeant's relentless demand for cleanliness) and anxiety (e.g. about death and violence, about sexual performance and betrayal by spouses and girlfriends). In the US cadences reflect the larger national culture and particularly African-American music styles.

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<sup>38</sup> Elkin (1946: 419) also noted how soldiers' language expresses virility, masculinity and freedom from social restraint characteristic of the exclusively male military world of that

However both these views (culture as something an organization has vs. something an organization is) portray organizational culture as being shared by members either in terms of shared values and attitudes or overlapping interpretative frameworks. This promotes the idea of organization-wide consensus, consistency (culture as glue that holds organizations together) and this “integrative” view has dominated the field of organizational studies. As Alvesson (1996: 4) has pointed out, “The use of culture theory in organization studies tends on the whole to assume consensus and harmony... There is also a heavy emphasis on a stable set of ideas, values and norms which are viewed as characterizing the organization as a whole”<sup>39</sup>. From the Integration vantage point culture is characterized by consistency, consensus and clarity.

### 5.3 Summary

<u>Features</u>	<u>Perspective</u>
<i>Orientation to consensus</i>	<u>Integration</u> organization-wide consensus
<i>Relation among manifestations</i>	consistency
<i>Orientation to ambiguity</i>	exclude it
<i>Metaphors</i>	culture as glue, organization as machine or “little society”

Table 2: Integration Perspective

time.

<sup>39</sup> Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels (1998: 315) extracted core concepts in the definition of organizational culture from the literature. They found that, “The core concept of organizational culture reveals that something is learned and it shapes the way things are done. Therefore organizational culture can be considered as a reflection of the direction in which an organization is going. It also indicates the degree to which norms are shared.”

The Integration perspective gives the reader insight into the broad organizational patterns and structures. It describes what is often easily observable – that is rites and ceremonies, dress codes, formal behavior, etc. In its symbolic studies it tries to uncover underlying assumptions or cultural codes which guide formal behavior.

The Integration perspective represents the bulk of writing on army culture. Although we did not review all of them (see Winslow 1999c for examples) many articles, particularly those written by military personnel reflect this monolithic view of culture. Army culture is seen as a “thing” which sets the army apart, makes it unique. Moreover, army culture seems to be under attack, threatened with extinction; something to be preserved, reinforced, saved from erosion, etc. All these articles and books share the view that army culture constitutes a whole, which should be shared by all members - if the organization is “healthy” or “strong”. Members learn it through socialization and participation in organizational rites and ceremonies. Leaders play an important role in preserving culture, creating it, molding it and transmitting it. (we will discuss this subject further in section 8). From an Integration perspective, there is – or at least there should be – consistency between the various components of the organization and a general widespread agreement and understanding of the organization’s culture (which often means core values). In the Integration approach culture is seen as the “glue” which holds the organization together.

## ***6. Differentiation Perspective***

In the 1990s some theorists began to criticize the idea of organization-wide consensus and consistency. In the Differentiation approach authors believe in a lack of consistency and a lack of consensus among organization members. They question the degree of homogeneity in organizations and place emphasis on difference, diversity and variation in groups in terms of their interests, objectives and action patterns (Alvesson 1996: 70; Martin and Meyerson 1988: 110). This approach is very similar to the Integration perspective in that the group is like a little society and members of the group share a common culture although there is difference between groups. Organizations are studied in terms of different subcultures which develop due to common experiences, environment, interaction patterns, etc. and they are analyzed in terms of ethnicity, gender, professional background and functional position in the organization. The subcultures co-exist in harmony, conflict or sometimes in indifference to each other and are therefore also analyzed in terms of their relationships to each other.

In terms of army culture, we find studies of different functional categories, e.g. Airborne, Rangers, Infantry, Artillery, etc; of command positions such as privates, NCOs, officers; and of race, gender, ethnicity. However, similar to Integration studies, Differentiation research defines culture as that which is shared among members of the group but not between groups. Within each subculture there is consensus - islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity (Ginger 1988: 727). Unlike Integration research, however, Differentiation studies define the boundary of a culture at the group level of analysis (Martin 1992: 96). "Consensus occurs only within the boundaries of subcultures..." Ambiguity is channeled so

that it does not intrude on the clarity which exists within these sub cultural boundaries”

(Martin 1992: 12). Ambiguity exists but in the interface between subcultures.

The Differentiation perspective can also unveil the workings of power in organizations, acknowledge conflicts of interest between groups, and attend to differences of opinion (Martin 1992: 83). For example there have been recent studies of the experience of women in the army. In Canada, Davis and Thomas (1998:7) indicate that women in the combat arms are still finding themselves in an environment that often does not foster an atmosphere of acceptance. They found that women regularly experienced an environment that was characterized by discrimination and harassment and that often conveyed messages of non-acceptance. This environment has been defined by men and maintained to train and employ men. The world that women enter is a world that defines and reinforces gender roles in a way that is in conflict with the role of a woman in the combat arms. The motivations and behaviours of each woman are interpreted in a way that leaves no room for women to be there because they “want to do the job”. On the other hand, women understand that they will have to become “one of the guys” if they are going to succeed. In the end, there is no where for them to go because they cannot achieve either of these conflicting roles (Davis and Thomas 1998:13).

There have also been many studies of diversity in the armed forces (see Soeters and van der Meulen 1999 as an example of a recent international collection on the subject). These include everything from issues of homosexuality to gender, from race to ethnicity. These studies engage the reader not so much in a discussion of army culture but they do describe the difficulties army culture has had in adapting to change imposed from without, i.e. as a result of social and political trends in the wider society (e.g. Mershon and Schlossman 1998). An

exception to the litany of difficulties and resistance is Moskos and Butler's (1996) description of the relative success of the US Army in racial integration. They point out to what extent the enlisted culture of the US Army can be considered to be an "Afro-Anglo" culture (Moskos and Butler's 1996: 128). They note the important impact that Black American culture has had on enlisted and NCO culture through speech, body language, gestures, music, religion etc. They refer to it as the "blackening of enlisted culture" which has occurred in the past two decades (1996: 43-44). However, they also note (1996: 118) that it is more difficult for Black officers to maintain this particular culture since they are expected to integrate into the existing officer corps traditions.

The Differentiation perspective can also demonstrate just how important informal culture can be and the positive (and negative) impacts it can have on an organization. Anna Simons' (1997) book is a narrative description of team life, leadership styles, personalities and motivations of the NCOs who make up Special Forces teams. Simons shows that the ability of the men to work together as a cohesive team is dependent for the most part on their ability to bond. Different social mechanisms ensure this through training, shared experience and of course the personalities of individuals who are able to cooperate with each other. In contrast, my own work (Winslow 1999a) on regimental subculture demonstrates how unit cohesion can be a double edged sword. In the Canadian Forces, regiments form subcultures with their own loyalties. Even though loyalty is perceived as a positive state in the military, the article shows that highly intense unit cohesion can, at times, be divisive. What is clearly an effective and necessary attitude for the battlefield can then become an exaggerated force that undermines good order and discipline. Unit pride can become so exaggerated that one only respects the members and/or officers of one's unit, ignoring and sometimes resenting



those outside the group. Bonds of loyalty can also lead members of a regiment to protect each other, sometimes by covering up for each other or by setting up walls of silence.

Similarly Watson (1997: 173) remarks that, "The most foolish action the military can take is to close ranks around the person on whom responsibility is fixed, feeling that blaming the one condemns all." He goes on to say that a military mantra usually follows, "When Colonel so and so was charged, we were all hurt. We closed ranks around him. We're family you know". Codes of silence are invoked. Whistle blowers are ostracized. "Patriotism is invoked and self-interest is confused with national interest". Watson is describing how sub or peer groups can generate their own values, beliefs and ideologies that may have little to do with the formal military system.

One of the most interesting studies of enlisted culture is *Squaddies. Portrait of a Subculture* (1986) in which John Hockey used participant observation field methods to study infantry privates in the British Army. Hockey shows how cohesion, teamwork and conformity with organizational demands also influences patterns of resistance. From the moment a recruit enters basic training, he begins to learn the "unofficial" ways of coping with army life. For example, there is a pattern known as "skiving" which seems to contradict the official ethos of "doing the job". Skiving implies evading work through a number of strategies such as not attracting attention to oneself, never volunteering, not reporting for more work when a job is finished, making it appear there is more work than there actually is, inducing symptoms of illness (a medical skiv). Thus unofficial patterns of behavior which conflict with official organizational demands seem to coexist with the official patterns. "Skiving" is part of an overall strategy by privates of "looking out for Number One". A private's survival strategy implies using every opportunity to make life easier. However what is most significant is the

change that takes place once the privates find themselves in an operational environment in Northern Ireland. Faced with intense danger, “looking out for Number One” means being the best soldier you can be in order to survive. In the field “looking out for Number One” and “doing the job” finally converged. “Skiving” (or not doing one’s job) would put the privates at physical risk therefore it was abandoned as a practice.<sup>40</sup> This study highlights how an informal value (such as “looking out for Number One”) can be relatively dysfunctional in garrison yet essential to good soldiering in the field.

Ingraham’s (1984) *The Boys in the Barracks* is a similar type of study of the garrison life and habits of American soldiers below the rank of sergeant.<sup>41</sup> Although this study was primarily aimed at uncovering drug use habits it gives the reader a unique look at garrison life in the 1980’s where there was a clear distinction among non-commissioned members who were there for a short time and those who were “lifers”. The non-lifers expressed explicit antimilitary norms. Bonds of family and friends outside of the Army were dominant and social life within the barracks occurred in informal settings such as those associated with drug consumption. As in Hockey’s (1986) British study, stealing within the primary group was not tolerated but outside of the barrack group it was an accepted mode of behavior and theft from the organization was not considered a crime but as exacting one’s due. It is interesting to note that Sion and Ben-Ari (1999: 17) found the same phenomenon in the IDF where “supplementation of equipment” implies that it is perfectly legitimate for members of a unit to steal – food, ammunition or clothes, for example – from other units. As Bryant (1974: 251)

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<sup>40</sup> This did not mean “sticking your neck out”. Taking unnecessary risk and chances on patrol was not considered “looking out for Number One” (Hockey 1986: 108).

<sup>41</sup> Moskos (1986:48-54) also makes brief reference to American Army enlisted culture and life in the barracks after the all volunteer era has begun. He notes a difference between the fragmented, competitive atmosphere in the barracks during the 1970’s and the positive changes in the 1980s.

has observed these activities are often unofficially approved of by officers since the initiative, resourcefulness, aggressiveness and decisiveness associated with stealing are also characteristics of a "good soldier". What emerges from these studies is the variability with which "traditional military values" are enacted.

Another example of work on a subculture is Irwin's (1993) study of NCOs in a Canadian infantry battalion. She notes that the relationship of a senior NCO to the men is typically a nurturing one although nurturance is not the aspect that is immediately evident. The NCO is like a mother to the troops, looking after hygiene, clothing, health, internal economy and daily practices, etc. The officer is more like a father concerned with broad policy and outside links. The NCO is also in a mediating position since he represents the officers to the men and vice versa. As in the British, American and Israeli studies on Non Commissioned Members, Irwin tells us that while officers are expected to follow the letter of the law, NCOs are unofficially permitted to work around the rules. They negotiate deals with other NCOs to obtain important resources through unofficial channels. They operate backstage while the officer occupies the front stage.

The Institutional/Occupational distinction has become one of the most widely referred to models in military sociology and it is an example of a model which has passed through two perspectives – Integration and Differentiation. This model is based upon the work of Morris Janowitz (see 1970, 1977). Changing technology, according to Janowitz, created new patterns of combat and therefore modified organizational behaviour in the military. In short, the more complex the technology of warfare, the narrower the differences between military and non-military establishments (Janowitz 1970: 143). Building upon the work of Janowitz, Charles Moskos (1973: 266) made reference to a "continuum ranging from a military organization

highly differentiated from civilian society to a military system highly convergent with civilian structures". Thus the Institutional / Occupational model began with an Integration perspective. This model assumes a monolithic military on a continuum ranging from a military organization highly divergent from civilian society to one highly convergent with civilian structures.

Moskos, however added a Differentiation perspective, pointing out that to argue that the military is either an institution or an occupation "is to do an injustice to reality. Both elements have been and always will be present in the military system" (Moskos 1988: 57). This seems to be reflected in what Moskos calls the segmented or plural military. The plural military is both convergent and divergent with civilian society and it simultaneously displays organizational trends that are civilianized and traditional. Moskos adds, however, that the segmented military "will not be an alloy of opposing trends, but a compartmentalization of these trends". He argues that the plural model does not foresee a "homogeneous military" lying somewhere between the civilianized and traditional poles, instead, "the emergent military will be internally segmented into areas which will be either more convergent or more divergent than the present organization of the armed forces"(Moskos 1973: 275). Thus subcultures appear in the organization according to institutional or occupational orientation. Moskos argues that divergent / traditional features in the military will become most pronounced in labour-intensive support units, combat forces and possibly at senior command levels. On the other hand, the convergent or civilianized features will accelerate where functions deal with education, clerical administration, logistics, medical care, transportation, construction and other technical tasks. The divergent or traditional sector will "stress customary modes of military organization", while at the same time, "there will be a

convergent sector which operates on principles common to civil administration and corporate structures” (Moskos 1973: 277) .

This theme has been picked up in many studies. For example, McCormick (1998) refers to it as “corporate” vs. the “muddy boots” army. The US Army is seen as divided into subgroups: “In one army, scrupulously groomed generals in pressed uniforms and spit-shined shoes ready themselves for battles over budgets and end strength on Capitol Hill. In the other, captains in wrinkled fatigues and dusty combat boots prepare their overworked units for uncertain mission in unknown places” ( McCormick 1998: 21). The theme even appears in popular novels such as the well know classic *Once an Eagle* by Anton Myrer (1996) where the protagonist, Sam Damon, has all the characteristics of an institutional soldier and leader. His antagonist, Courtney Massengale, manipulates the political system in Washington and makes all the right career moves, even though he has disdain for the rank and file and sends his soldiers into certain death in order to advance his personal reputation and career.

6.1 Summary

<u>Perspective</u>	
<u>Features</u>	<u>Differentiation</u>
<i>Orientation to consensus</i>	Sub cultural consensus
<i>Relation among manifestations</i>	inconsistency
<i>Orientation to ambiguity</i>	channel it outside subcultures
<i>Metaphors</i>	sub groups as islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity

Table 3: Differentiation Perspective

A Differentiation perspective can give the reader insight into the informal groupings and power relations in an organization. Similar to the Integration perspective, Differentiation studies observe formal patterns and behavior in groups as well as the underlying assumptions that guide behavior in groups. In addition Differentiation studies describe the organizational conditions that allow for the emergence of subcultures in an organization. From a Differentiation perspective, an organization is seen as divided, broken into constituent parts that, more often than not, are in conflict with each other – an orchestra where each musical section is doing its own thing. However, within the different sub groups there is a shared culture – enclaves or “islands” of consensus. From a Differentiation perspective, informal leadership may play as important a role as formal leadership in setting standards and upholding the “unwritten rules” which guide members’ actions as much (if not more) than the formal ones.

## *7. Fragmentation Perspective*

There's no limit to how complicated things can get on account of one thing leading to another. -E.B. White

The Fragmentation perspective grew out of a dissatisfaction with research focused on finding consistent cultural patterns (whether they be organization wide or just within subcultures) thereby excluding paradoxes, uncertainties and contradictions that do not fit the pattern. Fragmentation research argues that organizations have inconsistent, unclear and dissonant cultural manifestations. Ambiguity is the essence of organizational culture (Martin 1992: 130). According to Frost et al's (1991: 8) description of the Fragmentation approach "Consensus and dissensus co-exist in a constantly fluctuating pattern influenced by changes, for example in events, attention, salience, and cognitive overload. Any cultural manifestation can be, and is, interpreted in a myriad of ways." This view, which sees culture as dynamic and multivocal, represents a radical departure from those views that depict culture as a mechanistic, hierarchical system of stable relationships and universal symbols.

In addition, the Fragmentation approach points out that there is not one authoritative voice of interpretation for the researcher. There are many voices and many meanings whose understandings overlap, collide, enhance, and silence one another. This is similar to a post-modern approach where authors acknowledge the existence of alternative realities to be uncovered, and they look at just how differently people in the same organization understand and experience organizational reality. In post modernism, culture is an open-ended creative dialogue of subcultures, various factions, individuals etc. The activity of culture is "plural and

beyond the control of any individual”(Clifford 1983: 139). Thus individuals share some viewpoints, disagree about some and are ignorant or indifferent to others (Martin and Meyerson 1988: 117). “The assumption is that a multiplicity of views exists; ambiguity and change may appear in any number of places and vary with issues that the organization faces” (Ginger 1988: 727). Thus in addition to consistency there is also inconsistency and dissonance.

In the Fragmentation perspective an organization is a web<sup>42</sup> of individuals, sporadically and loosely connected by their changing positions on a variety of issues. Their involvement, their subcultural identities, and their individual self-definitions fluctuate, depending on which issues are activated at a given moment (Martin 1992: 153). Groups coalesce around specific issues and are context dependent. Subcultures are therefore fleeting, issue-specific coalitions that may or may not have a similar configuration in the future.

It is important to remember that it is not an absence of culture in an organization which creates ambiguity, it is the presence of a fragmented one which is loosely structured and incompletely shared. The organization’s culture emerges dynamically as cultural members experience each other, events and the organization’s features (a shared frame of reference or shared recognition of relevant issues (see Feldman 1991: 154). Martin has written extensively on the Fragmentation perspective and gives us the following definition of culture from this point of view:

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<sup>42</sup> This image depicts culture as a web of diverse, loosely coupled, and volatile networks of symbols and relationships. According to by Sabrosky Thompson and McPherson, (1982) military structure is also more like a web or network than a pyramidal bureaucracy of reporting relationships.



“As individuals come into contact with organizations, they come into contact with dress norms, stories people tell about what goes on, the organization’s formal rules, and procedures, its informal codes of behavior, rituals, tasks, pay systems, jargon and jokes only understood by insiders, and so on. These elements are some of the manifestations of organizational culture. When cultural members interpret the meanings of these manifestations, their perceptions, memories, beliefs, experiences, and values will vary, so interpretations will differ - even of the same phenomenon. The patterns or configurations of these interpretations, and the ways they are enacted, constitute culture” (Martin 1992: 3).

This perspective is the least used in approaches to the army although some recent Institutional /Occupational research hints at it. Some authors suggest that varying perspectives can be held by the same persons in different circumstances. For example, Ben-Ari (1998) tells us of the existence of two kinds of professionalism within the IDF. One is combat and operationally oriented while the other is administrative and technical. He notes (1998: 7) that although the expertise and orientation of these two types of professionalism represent conflicting logics of organized collective actions, they are *both* found in varying relative proportions in *all* components of military organization and in all situations. The French military sociologist Bernard Boene makes the same argument. Speaking of institutional and occupational forces, he notes that, “their relationship is one of dialectical tension: the full expression or incarnation of one logic is necessarily frustrated by the inescapable presence of the other” (Boene 1990: 25).

Other military research has hinted that confusion and paradox are the rule rather than the exception. For example, Sabrosky, Thompson and McPherson (1982) have described the US military as “organized anarchy”. Although government appointees and military officers in charge do what they can to see that decisions are made in a structured “rational” manner “information still becomes lost in the system, directed to the wrong people, or both. Similarly, during a crisis, the wrong people may try to solve a problem because of their prowess at

bureaucratic gamesmanship, or the right people (because of mismanagement or oversight) may be overlooked or sent elsewhere” (Sabrosky, Thompson and McPherson 1982: 142). They ironically note that this may not be such a bad thing, “The existence of bureaucratic inertia, fragmentation of authority, and relative lack of efficiency may be a collective blessing in disguise in certain circumstances. Elected and appointed officials are not always paragons of intelligence and wisdom, and the inability of the military bureaucracy to execute rapidly some radical (or reactionary) executive proposal could have some inadvertent utility” (Sabrosky, Thompson and McPherson 1982: 149).

Certainly, the Fragmentation perspective seems to describe the chaotic nature of ground warfare. War, like chaos is an intricate, turbulent, multi component processes, beyond effective monitoring and reasonable approximate depiction or prediction. Chaos has been described by Beaumont (1994: xiv) as an order of infinite complexity, as a type of randomness that appears in certain physical and biological systems. Chaos is intrinsic to the system rather than caused by outside interference. And war, like chaos exceeds the capacity of a single individual to understand it sufficiently to exercise effective control - regardless of the resources at his or her disposal. Bourke (1999: 9) tells us that the nature of knowledge is fractured and in battle it is often based upon confused and indeterminate experience.

This is not a new idea. Van Clausewitz’s fog of war suggests it, as does his dictum that war is the “province of chance”. T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia) saw war encompassing many fuzzy elements including the possibility of accident etc. which comprised “the ‘irrational tenth’ of the tactical equation” (Lawrence 1937: 193). Similarly, Beaumont (1994: 89) cites Rommel’s account of battle as a junior officer who frequently found himself in situations where confusion reigned. But as a commanding general things had not changed much. In his

race against France in 1940 Rommel met with constant confusion, delays, units acting out of phase, inadequate maps, communications failures, wild confusion and at one point confessed "I had no idea where the main body of the division was." Rommel's descriptions of grappling with complexity and disorder conformed in spirit to Eisenhower's admission that he had made several major decisions without basis in certainty when doing things that were so risky "as to be almost crazy" (cited in Beaumont 1994: 89). Even though much of the focus of books on military incompetence is on individual incompetence (e.g. David 1997, Dixon 1976) inevitably the fragmentary character of the battlefield and military organization for battle is described. David (1997) and Dixon (1976) and Watson (1997) give us tales of misinformation, fragmentary information, imprecise wording of orders, inadequate reconnaissance, poor logistics, inappropriate equipment, and meddling politicians. Dixon (1976) and Watson (1997) also note that not only is battlefield chaotic, leaders can be unpredictable and illogical as well as incompetent.

But perhaps the Fragmentation perspective will be most useful concerning the complexities of the future. It can be a useful analytical tool to deal with the confusion and ambiguity associated with peace operations. In the future, as missions become more complex and military roles polyvalent, boundaries will become unclear. Will the army have more police-like functions? Will the army be called upon to build democracy in far away lands in addition to defending it? Some of the more recent work on peace operations (see Winslow and Everts 2000, Winslow 2000) has begun to deal with organizational ambiguities. Factors which contribute to confusion include: a lack of strategic direction, expanded scope, limited intelligence, political and cultural diversity, multiple players, media intensity, lack of (or limited) rule of law, change in mission and changing rules of engagement. Whether as part of stable operations (e.g. Cyprus and the Sinai) or in the more unstable ones (e.g. Somalia or

Kosovo) peace missions reflect ambiguities, constraints, challenges, obstacles, risks, and frustrations that differ – at least qualitatively – from those experienced in conventional operations (see Pinch 1994). Again chaos theory (see Beaumont 1994, James, 1996) offers some concepts which could be used to explain patterns. In peace operations where an apparently minor action can lead to unpredictable effects, one is reminded of the analogy of the Lorenz effect where the flapping of a butterfly's wings can create conditions for a unstable weather system on another continent. This is all the more true given the media intensity and public scrutiny of military operations. A tactical decision can now have non predictable political repercussions and a small field event can turn into a political crisis.

## 7.1 Summary

<u>Perspective</u>	
<u>Features</u>	<u>Fragmentation</u>
<i>Orientation to consensus</i>	multiplicity of views (no consensus)
<i>Relation among manifestations</i>	complexity (not clearly consistent or inconsistent)
<i>Orientation to ambiguity</i>	focus on it
<i>Metaphors</i>	culture as web, organization as jungle

Table 4: Fragmentation Perspective

From a Fragmentation perspective organizational culture is characterized by ambiguity and loosely shared understandings which hold the members together in a loose web of relationships. As Clifford Geertz put it a quarter of a century ago, man “is an animal

suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun; I take culture to be those webs” (Geertz 1973: 5). Members of the organization do not interpret or share organizational structures and symbols in the same way. From a Fragmentation perspective, the sheer complexity and heterogeneity of modern day armies and the tasks they are asked to perform creates a lack of clarity and confusion. In fact any attempt to create a cohesive culture is doomed to fail since diversity, ambiguity and fluidity are the characteristics of modern organizational culture. Leadership seems to be decentered, that is, it does not play the determining role in the culture of the organization as it does in the Integration perspective. Culture is an open-ended creative dialogue of subcultures, various factions, individuals, etc. Because the activity of culture is “plural” it is “beyond the control of any individual” (Clifford 1983: 139). Leaders can, set the boundaries of the dialogue however they cannot determine the outcome. We will discuss this issue further in the next section.

## ***8. Culture Change – Three Perspectives***

There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. -Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Anyone associated with Western militaries knows that they have gone through important changes in the past decade (see Hillen 1999). These changes have included new technologies, budget reductions, downsizing and increased focus upon peace operations. In addition the Western militaries have been forced into adopting certain values and beliefs which reflect those of the wider society (e.g. integration of women and acceptance of homosexuality). There are also greater demands for transparency and public accountability.

From an Integration point of view, an organization like the Army is a society within a society and should maintain its distinctiveness. From a Differentiation perspective sub cultures within an organization can reflect and be partially determined by cultural groupings in the larger society. Societal culture will infiltrate and determine many of the meanings upon which organizational sub groups can draw. From a Fragmentation perspective, society itself is pluralistic and dynamic, supporting a broad array of different views and values to which organizations may subscribe. Thus armies can draw on their societal environment in the same way that they draw material resources. For example traditional warrior values may or may not resonate in the larger ambient culture(s). If resonance is not possible then I believe that it becomes increasingly difficult to justify certain purchases, training procedures, etc. On the other hand, from a Fragmentation point of view, the external pressures on the organization are themselves in a state of tension and ambiguity therefore producing dissonance in the organization.

The discussion of the relationship between the military and society according to the three perspectives would be a useful topic for another lengthy study. In the remainder of this section we will see what adopting one of the three perspectives means when trying to introduce change within an organization.

### ***8.1 Integration approach to culture change***

Certainly there is no universal formula for producing effective change and no widely accepted procedure for implementing it (Druckman et al. 1997: 7). However, if one takes an Integration view of culture then one holds certain assumptions about what culture is and what actions need to be taken in order to induce culture change. Organizations are assumed to be integrated wholes, little societies, normally stable and consensual. Culture change will be instituted to establish, maintain or return to a stable state. Because the organization is seen as homogeneous and culture as being shared by all the members, change can be introduced like dropping ink into a glass of water. From the top to the bottom the change will occur until the entire glass of water is the same color. In the same way the leaders at the top of an organization can set the tone and implement a change process. Once the mechanisms and policies are in place they can assume that it will occur more or less systematically throughout the organization. If there is interim conflict or ambiguity concerning the change, it is because of faulty implementation or it is a temporary state of affairs. Problems will disappear once most organizational members understand and are "on board".

The Integration literature on change can be divided into two approaches - case studies of change and advice to executives (Ouchi and Wilkins 1985: 476). This is a very

instrumental view - that culture or parts of it might be managed, controlled and intentionally changed (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 29). When this form of cultural engineering is proposed, manageable concepts (values, norms, etc.) and mechanisms (levers) for changing them are identified. For example, Druckman et al. (1997: 90) mention the following mechanisms for changing/forming/maintaining a culture: a unique and clearly articulated ideology; the recruitment of like-minded employees; the use of symbols to reinforce cultural attributes; repetitive socializing and training of employees in the key cultural values; the appraisal and rewarding of behavior consistent with the desired culture; and, the design of an organizational structure that reinforces the key cultural values among all organization members.

In pulling these levers, the role of management in an integration approach is clear. Leaders choose the basic change and/or are responsible for implementing it. They pull the levers. They engineer the change. The organization is seen as some sort of mechanistic system in which management identifies some destination (vision or end state) and then drives the organization in the right direction while watching at checkpoints along the way (DiBella 1996: 370). This approach assumes that change is a linear process and that the changed vision or new end state is fixed and can be collectively shared.

Leaders can also create strong cultures by shaping norms, instilling beliefs, inculcating values, and generating emotions (see Peters and Waterman 1982). Leaders communicate what is going to happen and they maintain control over how it will happen. According to Schein (1985: 2) "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture". He tells us that leaders embed and transmit organizational culture in five ways: by what they pay attention to, measure and control; by their reactions to critical incidents and crises; by deliberate role-modeling, coaching and teaching; by the choice of their criteria for allocation



of reward and status; by their choice of criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement and “excommunication”.

Again Schein’s work is often cited by military writers. For example Widen (1997: 20) affirms that, “The strategic leader should recognize that military cultures exist, that they impact the armed forces, and that they can be managed”. Dunivin (1997) also maintains that senior US military leaders are the best catalysts to produce a paradigm shift of US military culture “embodied by an inclusive whole”. Even Bass’ work on transformational leadership maintains that top management must articulate the changes that are required. “Desired role models of leadership begin at the top and are encouraged at each successive level below” (Bass 1998: 172).

Symbolic approaches to culture change are primarily aimed at normative control, that is directing the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experiences, thoughts and feelings that guide their actions. “Under normative control, members act in the best interest of the company not because they are physically coerced, nor purely from an instrumental concern with economic rewards and sanctions. ... Rather they are driven by internal commitment, strong identification with company goals, intrinsic satisfaction from work” (Kunda 1992: 11).

In the symbolic approach, culture can be changed through the creation of symbols. Organizations need to pay attention to the symbolic messages they send so that they are consistent with the desired change since symbols reflect what is important and valued. Even in symbolic approaches to change we see that leaders determine the symbol systems to be manipulated. Gagliardi (1986:118 - 119) tells us that ultimately management is symbolic

action therefore leaders must use methods and behavior aimed at creation and maintenance of organizational culture. They might, for example introduce new words or phrases (LDSHIP), create new stories<sup>43</sup> or histories (the role of minority groups in the organization's activities) or create new or revive old rites and rituals. Trice and Beyer (1985) actually suggest six rites that can be used to change culture. They include rites of passage, rites of degradation (here someone is publicly punished or fired), rites of enhancement (good news celebrations), rites of renewal (organizational development activities), rites of conflict reduction and rites of integration (social events). Van Maanen and Kunda (1989: 49) tell us that ritual offers managers a mode to exercise power along cognitive and affective planes. In this sense, rituals are "mechanisms through which certain organizational members influence how other members are to think and feel - what they want, what they fear, what they should regard as proper and possible, and ultimately, perhaps, who they are".

In the Integration approach diversity, difference and dissent are treated as problems to be ironed out rather than issues to be explored or possible catalysts for change. In the end, culture is just another lever that management can pull in order to institute change or improve performance in the organization. If we were to summarize the integration approach to military culture change it would be encapsulated in the words "top down" and "planned".

## ***8.2 Differentiation approach to culture change***

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<sup>43</sup> According to Boyce (1996: 19) shared storytelling has a number of applications: expressing the organizational experience of members or clients; confirming the shared experiences and shared meaning of organization members and groups within the organization; orienting and socializing new members; amending and altering the organizational reality; developing sharpening and renewing the sense of purpose held by organization members; preparing a group (or groups) for planning implementing plans and decision making in line with shared purposes; and, co-creating vision.

The Differentiation perspective assumes that organizational subcultures exist and are related to specific variables such as department, function, profession, work groups, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, etc. Groups are embedded in different contexts or patterns of interaction which lead to collective understandings that differ by group (Van Maanen and Barley 1985: 48). Thus members of the group share a sub culture – a particular set of meanings, understandings, values and prescriptions for action. Different subculture set up social boundaries compared to other groups with which they may be in conflict or in accommodation. When change is viewed from a Differentiation perspective, it appears localized, incremental, and triggered (if not controlled) by pressures from a segmented environment (Martin 1992: 105). According to the Differentiation perspective change can result from a struggle among groups, with varying degrees of power to impose and resist change (Martin 1992 : 10). Different groups will try to place their representatives in strategic positions and one way to control change is to control the promotion process thus those who support a new culture can rise to positions of power within the organization. Changing culture can also occur naturally as new generations rise to power positions in the organization (see Murray 1999: 30, MacGregor 1997: 42).

The Differentiation approach is critical of culture change imposed from the top. There are inherent contradictions in the idea that the same kinds of values and behaviors exist and therefore the same kind of controls can be imposed upon diverse groups in an organization. Employees do not act as passive recipients of cultural change. They react, resist and reinterpret these changes. In his work on the British Army Hockey shows how the behavior of privates departs from, is deviant to, can be contrasted with , the expectations and dictates embodied in the official manuals. “This has enabled me to show how relationships between NCOs and men, officers and men, and men and men, are very much a negotiated order”

(Hockey 1986: 141). The organizations itself then needs to be looked at as a series of accommodations, negotiations and bargains.

The presence of subcultures in an organization can affect change due to their contradictory interpretations of a change (see Hauser 1998 for a discussion of this). Some studies draw attention to the ways internal loose coupling can dampen the flow of information in an organization. However, most Differentiation studies offer a “snapshot” of a particular subculture at a single point in time. They rarely discuss change. When they do they generally focus on change to the subculture rather than on an individual (formal or informal) leader (Martin 1992: 104-5).

Trice and Beyer (1993) do point out that cultural leadership can occur in many different groups at the same time within the same organization. They approach leadership at the sub cultural level as well as the overall cultural level of the total organization. Therefore if one were to try to implement a change rather than waiting for it to result from a power struggle between groups, one would have to identify the concerned groups and their informal leaders and involve them in the change process while allowing them to maintain their distinctiveness. It would be very important to understand the informal culture of the various groups in order to understand how it would interact with the proposed change. The presence of multiple cultures in an organization means that strategies for planned change may have to consider simultaneous, multiple, and interdependent changes within and between culturally heterogeneous groups. If we were to summarize the Differentiation approach to culture change in an organization then we would have to use the word “negotiated”.

### *8.3 Fragmentation approach to culture change*

The Fragmentation perspective assumes that organizational culture is already fluctuating and unstable therefore analysis seldom offers clear and comforting prescriptions for action concerning culture change. The idea is that formal organizations may be the stage for complicated, tangled interactions giving rise to unintended results. In short, if you push on one side you have no idea what will come out the other. According to Bolman and Deal (1997: 23) "Taking action in an organization is like shooting a wobbly cue ball into a large and complex array of self-directed billiard balls. So many balls bounce off one another in so many directions that it is hard to know how things will look when everything settles down". Ambiguity is the operating principle, not something that is an intermittent state in an otherwise stable environment.

Alvesson and Berg state that (1992: 92, 183) organizational cultures are so heterogeneous that it is impossible to introduce planned change. Things do change, but according to their own logic, not according to anyone's plans. If change is attempted it is difficult to predict what the result will be. Therefore Fragmentation studies of change offer few guidelines for those who would normatively control the change process (see Martin and Frost 1996: 609). In fact leaders may not be able to send clear signals at all since whatever they do will be interpreted and reinterpreted in unexpected and unintended ways. Their roles are less central and less effective than that portrayed in the Integration perspective since their influence depends on others' interpretations and the effect of these interpretations on behavior. Similar to the Differentiation perspective, organizational members are not seen as passive recipients of culture change, they are imaginative consumers of leaders' visions. As

Bryman (1996: 286) points out, one of the implications of the Fragmentation perspective for leaders is that their strategies for change are problematized.

There are however, a few indications of how to approach change using a Fragmented approach. Alvesson and Berg (1992: 168) describe the need for dialogue. Leaders can therefore set the parameters of the dialogue even though they cannot control the outcome Bryman (1996: 285, 287). Leaders' messages can frame organizational responses – even rejection of an idea is framed by that idea. In this way, a new state of affairs is created through accommodation, negotiation and bargaining. Change will be something that is continually being negotiated. It represents an inter-subjective world where the meanings of any organizational change are likely to be temporary and partial. Since those holding power will have more influence. Some of their meanings will prevail over others with varying degrees of success (see Fineman 1994: p.81). If we were to summarize the Fragmentation approach to culture change in an organization then we would have to use the word “emergence” which implies that change will emerge from the dialogue which occurs between organizational members. It cannot be planned.

#### ***8.4 Summary***

In Rosen's study of military innovations he observes that it is very difficult if not impossible to know what causes change. “Factors found to be important for innovation in one study are found to be considerably less important, not important at all, or even inversely important in another study” (Rosen 1991: 5). In order to even attempt change, I believe that all three perspectives must be taken into consideration so that a wide range of strategies can

be developed. "A single perspective view of the cultural change process is misleadingly incomplete" (Frost et al 1991: 158). To be aware of culture in terms of the three perspectives increases the likelihood of success. It also allows organizational members and leaders to question their basic assumptions. In this way culture is not only seen as a thing to be changed but as a dynamic system. Change, then becomes a form of organizational learning. The organization continually "learns how to learn"<sup>44</sup> by maintaining processes that critically examine key assumptions, beliefs, tasks, decisions, and structural issues.

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<sup>44</sup> See Cook and Yanow (1993); Normann (1985); Purser and Pasmore (1992); Weick and Westley (1996) for discussions on learning organizations.

## 9. Conclusions

A warrior's honour is a slender hope, but it may be all there is to separate war from savagery.  
And a corollary hope is that men can be trained to fight with honor. Armies train people to  
kill, but they also teach restraint and discipline.

*Michael Ignatieff*

I began this discussion saying that our understanding of culture was intuitive. It is like "time". It is elusive. Do we regard it as an objective "fact" located "out there" in the external world, or as a subjective "essence" which is constructed via a "network of meaning". Do we think of culture/time as real and concrete or as essential and abstract? Do we think of culture/time as homogeneous (after all time units are measured as equivalent) or as heterogeneous (we know that time units are experienced differentially) As Hassard (1996: 582) asks, "Should time be regarded as a 'unitary quantitative commodity' or as a 'manifold qualitative experience?'. My answer to this question is that it depends on the perspective that you adopt. The hill you decide to sit on when you watch sunrise over the town will determine how you see the town.

Throughout the paper, I have been pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of all three perspectives and giving examples of how they have been used in the study of army culture. My underlying assumption was that the strength of the approach has been this multi dimensionality, that using all three perspectives enhanced understanding of army culture.

Why do all three perspectives make sense? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that army culture reflects the impulse to order (Integration) the chaos (Fragmentation) of warfare. Accepting the assumption that combat lies at the heart of army culture as its *raison d'être*, we



can observe the integrative processes which are set in motion to control the essentially chaotic task of waging war. This produces a structured set of patterning (hierarchy, ritual etc.) in a the fragmentary, fluctuating and fluid environment which characterizes (the fog of) war. This creates the dynamic and contradictory impulses characteristic of a rational organization that demands that soldiers be warriors who can kill and be killed in a very irrational environment.

Thus the cross-pull between order and chaos becomes a principle of army culture and becomes visible in many forms (highly ritualized promotion ceremonies and drunken initiations and hazings, rationality of tactics and the raw emotions of battle skill training, etc.). In my view the dialectic between order and chaos constitutes the real heart of army culture.

In an army organization strong currents and undercurrents co-exist creating linear orderliness and formalistic hierarchical authority, rigorous physical training, fixation on details, suppression of individuality. Yet at the same time the use of idea of art (which is a creative and intuitive process) of war, the gut feelings of leadership are necessary. Like canoeists trained on a lake to shoot rapids.<sup>45</sup> When they enter the raging stream of water and the rapidly changing currents, they quickly abandon the rhythm and sense of order and concentrate mainly on staying upright. Decisions and actions thus become a mix of deliberate thought and reflex mixed with a certain form of creativity and instinct.

Since I believe that the core dialectic of army culture is the structuring of chaos which creates a dynamic tension between ordering and chaotic forces, between integrative and disintegrative forces, I do not think that this core will not change in the near future - even if

armies are primarily involved in operations other than war. As soldiers can attest to, peace operation environments are very chaotic. However since the chaos of peace operations is qualitatively different from the chaos of war, then the structuring of that chaos is also bound to change. Thus the shift in missions will impact on army culture but not destroy its core dialectic.

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<sup>45</sup> Metaphor taken from Beaumont (1994: 124).

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